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From: [] Report No: RFD-699 Local File No: *3P*
No. of Pages: 2 No. of Enclosures: 0
Report Made By: [] Approved By: []
Distribution:
By copy to: Wash (3) Orally to: Political Officer
[] (1)
[] (2) Subject: Secret Activities
of the Mifti
Source Cryptonym: [] References:
Source, Operational Data, and Comments:
MICROFILMED
FEB 21 1963
DOC. MICRO. SER.

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SOURCES/METHODS/EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2008

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Classification

Form No. 50-109
FEB 1948

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Subject: Secret Activities of the
Mufti

Report No: RSD-699

Date of Information: Late September

Place Acquired: Damascus, Syria

Date Acquired: 25 September 1951

Evaluation: C-5

Date of Report: 4 October 1951

Source: C []

Executive (NAME)

1. Since May 1948, the influence of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) has deteriorated steadily. The offices which it maintains in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut are largely concerned with identifying persons, recording births and deaths, providing laissez-passer and reporting general information to the Cairo headquarters of the Mufti, Hajj Amin ~~ABU~~ HUSAYNI. While the public treasury of the AHC still is in existence under Izzat TANNUS as General Treasurer, and while ostensibly a tax is levied on every person living in Palestine, according to his means, this arrangement now produces so little revenue that the financial position of the AHC offices is extremely poor.
2. In addition to the public accounts of the AHC, consisting of annual subsidies from Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as from taxation and donations to the public treasury, the Mufti receives covert funds which he personally controls and for which no accounting is made.
3. The Mufti maintains dictatorial control over the AHC. Committee members are pre-war supporters selected by him and representing no parties or communities as such.
4. The Mufti presently, in effect, is using the AHC offices as a front for his covert activities. He is secretly organizing terrorist groups which will incorporate some of the membership of the Palestinian war-time organizations (the Gallant Guides, the Youth, and the Holy War Fighters).
5. One such group, with jurisdiction over northern Palestine, Jordan and southern Syria, is directed by Dr. ~~Daoud~~ al-HUSAYNI assisted by Bahjat ABU-CHAIRIYAH and ~~Salim~~ RIHANI, from headquarters in Arika (Jericho), Palestine.
6. A second group, with jurisdiction over Lebanon and northern Syria, is directed by ~~Muhammad~~ Salim ABU-LABAN assisted by Muhammad Nimir AWDAH and ~~Muhammad~~ al-SAFURI, from headquarters in Beirut.
7. Muhammad Salim ABU-LABAN has further been charged by the Mufti with the task of forming new terrorist bands to operate in Israel. He currently commutes between Cairo, Damascus and Beirut. Recently the Egyptian government confiscated a supply of gold from ABU-LABAN's car as he attempted to smuggle it across the frontier.

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8. Under direct orders from the Mufti, Muhammad NIMR ANDAH and Muhammad NIMR AL-NASEER are now engaged in preparing Arab terrorist groups for action. Acting in cooperation with the Moslem Brothers (Ikhwan al-Muslimin) in Syria, MASRI, assisted by Muhammad al-DAJANI, is supervising the training of young men for para-military action. Two training sites have been opened in Damascus, one in the Kidian quarter and a second in the Bab al-Jibaya district. The expenses of this training are being defrayed with money collected on Palestine Day in Syria last spring.

9. Source lists the following known adherents of the Mufti:

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also

Muhammad 'Ali ALUA Pasha	- Egypt
Salih HARB	"
Muhammad RAMADAN (Of Moslem Brotherhood)	- Egypt
Mustafa SIBA'I	- Syria
Ma'ruf DAM-LIBI	"
Muhammad Salim ABU-LABAN	- Palestine
Dr. Da'ud al-HUSAYNI	"
Mahmud SAFURI	"
Muhammad NIMR ANDAH	"
Bahjat ABU-GEHRBIYYAH	"
Qasim RIHAWI	"

10. Source adds that, in Egypt and Syria, the Mufti's main political support comes from the Moslem Brotherhood. To source's knowledge, this support is effective in Syria.

Field Notes: para. 5, cf. RLB-2760.

paras. 6 & 7, see SO-55740 and RLB-2746 for reports on ABU-LABAN.

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